HRSA 16-047 Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Impact (ECCS Impact)

Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – UPDATED February 25, 2016

Q&A from the February 23, 2016 TA Webinar have been added to this list starting with number 39. Based on the TA Webinar, updates *(in italics)* have been added to the original answers for questions # 22, 23, 32.

1. **Q: How many applicants will be funded?**
   A: Up to 15 recipients will be awarded.

2. **Q: Does the ECCS Impact program replace or is this a supplement to the current Early Childhood Comprehensive System grants that end July 31, 2016?**
   A: The ECCS Impact is a *new competition* with new purpose and goals. As of August 1, 2016, this ECCS Impact program will replace the current Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant program that ends July 31, 2016. This new competition is not a supplement or an addition to the current ECCS grants.

3. **Q: Is HRSA 16-047 Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Impact: a grant, cooperative agreement or a contract?**
   A: The ECCS Impact is a grant program.

4. **Q: Is the HRSA 16-047 Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Impact FOA a formula FOA or a competitive FOA?**
   A: The ECCS Impact is a competitive FOA.

5. **Q**: **Does the definition of Child Developmental Health include prevention and promotion? In one place in the FOA it includes these terms and in another it doesn't.**
   A: The definition of Child Developmental Health can include both prevention and promotion. See FOA, page 26, for original definition.

6. **Q: Are organizations in countries other than the US eligible to apply to implement the program in their country?**
   A: No, the focus of the ECCS Impact program includes strengthening leadership and expertise in continuous quality improvement (CQI) and supporting innovation among a cohort of recipients representing US states/territories and their identified place-based communities. For additional information, see page7 of FOA, Eligibility section.

7. **Q: Must the applicant be a state/territory agency?**
   A: No, please review the eligibility, page 7 of the FOA. Note that the recipient should be able to represent the state/territory in the CoIIN activities.

8. **Q: The technical assistance (TA) webinar date is February 23, 2016. Could it be sooner?**
   A: This list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) serves as interim TA; please contact Barbara Hamilton at bhamilton@hrsa.gov with additional questions.

9. **Q: Is the purpose of this grant to work with only children that are 3 years of age?**
   A: No. The purpose of this program is to enhance early childhood (EC) systems building and demonstrate improved outcomes in population-based children's developmental health and family well-being indicators using a Collaborative Innovation and Improvement Network (CoIIN) approach. An early childhood system is defined as an organized, purposeful partnership of interrelated and interdependent agencies/organizations representing health, mental health, social services, families and caregivers, and early childhood education to develop seamless systems of care for children from birth to kindergarten entry.

10. **Q. On page 2, in paragraph 2, what does "web" mean?**
    A: For this FOA, the "web" is the internet. Much of the CoIIN and collaboration activities including discussions will take place electronically/virtually over the internet.

11. **Q: On page 2, in paragraph 2, what does "real-time data" mean?**
    A: Real-time data denotes information that is delivered immediately after collection. There is no delay in the timeliness of the information provided.

12. **Q. Does the leader of the place-based community CoIIN need to travel to the contiguous States?**
    A: A designated member of the place-based community should attend at least one learning collaborative on site. In all likelihood, it will be held in the contiguous US.

13. **Q: I'm assuming that the one-time learning collaborative takes place nationally; would this require out-of-state travel?**
    A: Recipients are required to "ensure the community teams attend at least one on site, in person, learning collaborative facilitated by the ECCS CoIIN TAC." The location has not been selected; it may require out-of-state travel.

14. **Q: Would choosing only 1-2 communities vs. 4-5 communities be considered less of a strong application?**
    A: No. Independent reviewers will assess the strength of the application by the review criteria starting on page 18 including the strength and reasoning for the community chosen in the NEEDS ASSESSMENT section, page 9. As stated in the FOA, page 1, at least one of the identified communities should be a community receiving state and/or tribal Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) services.

15. **Q: How is "MIECHV community" defined? Could we select one of the new (FY16) MIECHV communities, or are we limited to the communities identified and approved in prior MIECHV proposals?**

A: The identified communities should be a community "receiving" state and/or tribal Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) services at the time of submitting the application.

16. **Q: Does HRSA expect a certain level of readiness within identified communities, and if so, how is readiness defined? Is there any guidance about what HRSA is looking for in terms of depth vs. breadth of the investment, the size of our chosen community, its geographic or population factors, etc.?**

A: Independent reviewers will assess the strength of the application by the review criteria starting on page 18 including the strength and reasoning for the community chosen in the NEEDS ASSESSMENT section. Please review the NEEDS ASSESSMENT section in the Narrative and the NEED Criteria section for the factors that will be measured.

17. **Q: Where can I find additional detail regarding the planned CoIIN approach for the ECCS Impact grant? Our community collaborations currently use a few different action learning and quality improvement models, and we would like to look at how they align with the ECCS Impact approach.**

A: As stated in the ECCS Impact FOA Background section, many of these [HRSA] collaboratives have utilized the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) Collaborative Model (http://www.ihi.org/engage/collaboratives/Pages/default.aspx).

18. **Q: Will members of the state-level Advisory Team have the opportunity to participate in the CoIIN, or will the CoIIN meetings and trainings be limited to the community site-level teams?**

A: The FOA, page 4, states the following requirements that "the recipient must, during the course of the project: participate in all CoIIN virtual sessions facilitated by the ECCS CoIIN TAC and at least one on site, in person, learning collaborative facilitated by the ECCS CoIIN TAC in person and ensure the community teams attend at least one on-site learning collaborative facilitated by the ECCS CoIIN TAC in person." Additional information about meaningful participation will be available to recipients once grant funds are awarded.

19. **Q: Are there more details on the benchmarks and data points from the previous year ECCS program reporting requirements that will be collected?**

A: The ECCS Impact grant will collect information and data points based on the work of the CoIIN activities and EC Core indicators. The previous benchmarks and data points from the current ECCS grant are not required in the new ECCS Impact grant.

20. **Is it up to each recipient to determine what outcome they're measuring to increase by 25%?**

A: As stated on page 4 of the ECCS Impact FOA , the recipient must, during the course of the project: "identify, implement and, if necessary, build a state/territory EC data system for collection and

reporting of EC core process and outcome indicators that will be developed or integrated within an existing early childhood data system during the CoIIN process."

21. **Q: Regarding the aim to show a 25 percent increase in developmental skills among their community's 3 year old children: Do you mean actual developmental skills (gross motor, fine motor, social-emotional), or does that mean improvements in children's developmental health as defined by the FOA (improvements in surveillance, screening, referral and follow-up)?**
A: It is the intent of this program, that improvements in the surveillance, screening, referral and follow-up will lead to actual increase in children's development skills such as gross motor, fine motor, social-emotional that are age appropriate at 3 years of age

22. **Q: To track the <u>aim</u> of a 25% increase, should the recipient:**
    1) **track the increase on the same kids (3 years old at baseline and then at 60 months, the same children would be 8 years old)** *OR*
    2) **Collect baseline for 3 year olds at the beginning of the project and then collect data for children who are 3 year olds at 60 months?**
A: The latter option, number two (2) above, best represents the aim.
ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM THE TA WEBINAR:
22a.***Q: Does 25% increase mean 25% from baseline or 2% point increase?***
A: 25% from baseline.
22b.Q: How should baseline be measured? Can we for example use number of screenings as a proxy in the short term outcome? Many states do not have a data system collecting developmental milestones.
A: The applicant will need to make a decision on what to start with and work from there to reach by the end of the 5th year the intent of the aim.
23b. Q: **Is the 25% increase from baseline referring to a system improvement or the improvement of children's development?**
A: Improvement of children's age appropriate developmental skills

23. **Q: Does each place-based community participate in all three 18 month sessions? Are the three contiguous learning cohorts different ones for each 18 month cycle, or is it deeper learning in the same communities over the 5 years?** : **Do communities need to commit for 4-5 years if they are only participating in one cohort?**
A: As noted in the FOA, page 4, all recipients commit to the 5 year process and initially community CoIIN teams are required to commit to a working period of 48-60 months. Because the recipients and the teams will be engaged in a CoIIN process, flexibility will be taken into consideration as the groups move through the quality improvement process.   Participation would be assessed at the onset of each cohort with recipient, local community and leadership team dialogue with the ECCS CoIIN Technical Assistance Center. The topics to focus on for the CoIIN collaborative will be decided by the recipients and participating communities. ***ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE GIVEN DURING THE TA WEBINAR: Communities could stay in all three of the 18 month cycles, it may depend on readiness and where they are in the process. Some communities may be more knowledgeable about collective impact and quality improvements. Some of that will be determined when they all get together with the ECCS CoIIN Coordination Center. We envision that the topics will reflect the two major areas of children's developmental health and family well-being. How that evolves is really for the group to decide; keeping the AIM in front of the decision-making that each group will make. What we have learned from some other CoIIN activities; there are various levels of readiness for the different teams and individuals within the team, that you identify and thereby you have your rapid ready***

group and other sectors learn from them over time. Successful growth and impact occurs as time proceeds. Teams realize there is an opportunity to learn with one another and implement that those learnings is a move forward.

24. **Q: What does a "cohort" mean for the purposes of this ECCS Impact program and the ECCS CoIIN?**
A: Cohort is defined in the glossary, page 26, as: "a group of place-based communities, selected by the ECCS Impact recipients that participate in CoIIN improvement cycles."

25. **Q: Is "learning collaborative" associated with a specific cohort of communities?**
A: Yes, for the purposes of this ECCS Impact program, the place-based communities selected by the recipients will be active participants in this ECCS CoIIN learning collaborative.

26. **Q: Does HRSA have a definition for place-based community?**
A: As described in the glossary, page 27, place-based community is defined as "social unit of any size that shares common values and bound together because of where they reside, work, visit or otherwise spend a continuous portion of their time. Work around place-based communities in this funding opportunity centers around intentional efforts to build, sustain and operationalize community capacity in improving systems around children's developmental health and family well-being."

27. **Q. Is there actual guidance on the budget and budget narrative beyond referring to the SF424 spreadsheet?**
A: See the SF424 Application Guide link on page 14 of the FOA. This document provides additional detail.

28. **Q. Are we allowed (like we did with Race to the Top) to do a 2-state partnership and apply as one entity from both states?**
A: There are no policies that say this is unallowable. Please note the recipient must show that they can represent both early childhood systems for the respective states/territories. One organization will need to be designated as the primary and the other could serve as a subcontractor.

29. **Q: Regarding Performance Measures: on page 15 it states that data collection/performance measures are for our planning use only. How would you suggest we best proceed if the measures will be changing during grant application or soon after?**
A: The FOA states the performance measures and data collection information is for your PLANNING USE ONLY. These forms are not to be included as part of this application. However, this information will be due to HRSA within 120 days after the Notice of Award." Therefore, applicants do not need to address in the application.

30. **Q: For Attachment 9: Does the Summary Progress Report count towards the 80 page limit?**
A: Yes.

31. **Q: Can the grant be used to explore and plan for the development of the shared data system? Or**

is it expected that a shared data system is in place and this grant helps to enhance it? Are there any preferences/priority points to established vs developing?

A: In regards to the requirements of the shared data system on page 4, the FOA states the following: "The recipient must, during the course of the project: identify, implement and, if necessary, build a state/territory EC data system for collection and reporting of EC core process and outcome indicators that will <u>be developed or integrated within an existing early childhood data system during the CoIIN process (please note: it is highly encouraged that the system to collect and report indicators for this project be compatible with or incorporated within an existing early childhood data system currently operating in a state-wide/territory-wide capacity</u>."

Please note that some of the decisions on the data system will be influenced by the CoIIN activities as part of the quality improvement process. Review the criteria.

There are no preference or priority points assigned to established or developing data systems.

32. **Q: For Attachment 6 "Letters of Support from State Advisory Team Members" – should we include letters of support from each advisory team member/organization represented?**

    A: Please review the criteria, page 20. ***REVISED during the TA CALL:*** *Due to the number of potential members and letters, we will allow a submission of a list of the letters of support and from whom; noting that they are on file for review*.

33. **Q: Has there been discussion about alignment/partnering with the preschool development grants?**

    A: There is not a specific requirement but one of the key representatives to the state /territory advisory team listed on page 3 are: Early childhood education representatives (examples might include state/territory Department of Early Learning; Child Care Administrator; state/territory early childhood educators association (Head Start/Association for the Education of Young Children; Family Child Care Association); School Pre-K organization).

34. **Q: Is working with tribal communities encouraged and would it strengthen our application to focus on this group? Similar to the Promise Zone Priority Points?**

    A: The FOA states on page one that "at least one of the identified communities should be a community receiving state and/<u>or tribal </u>Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) services." Priority points will only be given to Promise Zone and/or Rural IMPACT communities with a maximum amount of five points total. This means that any one application can only receive a maximum of 5 priority points. Independent reviewers will assess the strength of the application by the review criteria starting on page 18 including the strength and reasoning for the community chosen in the NEEDS ASSESSMENT section. Please review the NEEDS ASSESSMENT section in the Narrative, page 9, and the NEED Criteria section, page 18, for the factors that will be measured.

35. **Q. Our state/territory does not have counties to "describe the plan by which the applicant will facilitate collective impact at the 1) state, 2) county, and 3) community levels, as well as 4) across all three levels "as requested in the Methodology section, page 10. Will we be disqualified for not being able to facilitate collective impact /data on that level?**

    A: No, if you do not have three levels for facilitating this work. Please note this in the application.

36. **Q. Could we include a multi-county region as one of our communities?**
    A: Please review the definition of place-based community, page 27 in the glossary, to see if the multi-county region meets the definition.

37. **Q: How do we pick "topic areas" from Appendix B? Are we given options to choose from or do we provide suggestions?**
    A: Topics will be selected in concert with the recipient, communities, and the ECCS CoIIN Technical Assistance Center at the beginning of the project.

38. **Q: I'm having trouble accessing and/or downloading the FOA announcement/instructions and/or forms on Grants.gov?**
    A: To access and download the FOA announcement:
    1) Go to: http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=281007
    2) Find and click on the "Package" tab at the top of the window.
    3) On the next screen, find the "Actions" column in the table and click on the "Select Package" link.
    4) You will be prompted to enter your name and contact information to receive any real-time updates made to this open grant funding opportunity. Enter your name or check the box to opt out of providing an email address. Click on the "Submit" button.
    5) Under "Option 1: Download Instructions and Package"
        • Click on the "Download Instructions" button to download a copy of the official FOA in PDF format.
        • Click on the "Download Package" button to download a PDF document of the official forms required to be completed for your application.

Information on compatibility:
Please note, some have reported difficulties using the Chrome browser to access and download the packages and have better success with Internet Explorer, Firefox and Safari.

Application packages on Grants.gov are designed for compatible versions of Adobe Reader only. You may use any Operating System (OS) to view www.grants.gov and submit application packages provided that you are able to install a compatible version of Adobe Reader on your OS. Please complete the steps below to download a compatible version of Adobe Reader.

1) Go to www.grants.gov . At the top of the screen, place your cursor over the APPLICANT tab. A menu will display.
2) Click on the ADOBE SOFTWARE COMPATIBILITY link.
3) The ADOBE SOFTWARE COMPATIBILITY page will display.
4) To download a compatible version of Adobe Reader, click on the CLICK HERE TO GET A CURRENT OR PREVIOUS VERSION OF ADOBE READER link.
5) You will be routed to the Adobe website. Complete the steps listed on the Adobe website to download and install Adobe Reader.

If you need technical assistance with downloading or installing Adobe Reader, please contact Adobe Support or your IT department for further assistance.

You may attach files saved with different types of applications, such as Microsoft Word or Excel, to your application package. Please review the instructions for the funding opportunity to determine the file type recommended by the offering agency for any documentation which will be attached to the application package.

Please contact Grants.gov support line: 1-800-518-4726 or send an email to Support@Grants.gov for help in accessing.   Please have funding # HRSA 16-047 available to give to support line.

New FAQs as of February 24, 2016

39. **Q: Change in name of the ECCS CoIIN Technical Assistance Center.**

    A: The original companion FOA to the ECCS Impact FOA was named the ECCS CoIIN Technical Assistance Center HRSA 16-179.. However, due to a variety of reasons the new name will be ECCS CoIIN Coordination Center. The funding number will remain the same.

40. **Q: Could we include a multi-county region as one of our communities?**

    A: Please review the definition of place-based community, page 27 in the glossary, to see if the multi-county region meets the definition.

41. **Q: How do we pick "topic areas" from Appendix B? Are we given options to choose from or do we provide suggestions?**

    A: Topics will be selected in concert with the recipient, communities, and the ECCS CoIIN Technical Assistance Center at the beginning of the project.

42. **Q: Can we partner with MIECHV for a combined MOU/MOA for our partnerships (i.e. one MOU for both programs?)**

    A: No, there should be a separate MOU for the ECCS Impact. ECCS Impact has different purpose, different timeline, etc. than MIECHV).

43. **Q: Where is additional guidance on the budget and budget narrative?**

    A: Read the SF424 Application Guide for more information and note that Attachment 7 is required for the 5th year budget (see page 16 of FOA).

44. **Q: Are core indicators referring to a set of core indicators that will be established through the CoIIN, a single set established by HRSA or can it be ones that states have adopted?**

    A: First, HRSA does not have a set of core indicators established for this project. The FOA allowed for flexibility. The recipient may develop core indicators through the CoIIN process and then integrate into other systems in the state territories. The recipient may already have some that could be part of the ECCS CoIIN work and integrated into the revised project.

45. **Q: Organizational chart – should it be of the organization of the recipient or an organizational chart of the project?**

    A: Please submit as listed for *Attachment 5 – Project Organizational Chart*.

46. **Q: In the FOA when it says "should" for members of the Advisory Team and Community teams, does that mean those are required or suggested?**

    A: In the FOA it states that these teams are required, however the FOA also states the types of representatives should be key members but does not say required. Please note that the criteria on page 20, states "consider the extent to which the applicant demonstrates…. a commitment and participation of the following key leadership on its advisory team for this project: Governor's Office, Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Early Childhood Leadership Advisory Council/System; Title V leadership; family engagement leadership; public and private primary health care; mental health representatives; and early childhood education".

47. **Q: QUESTIONS ON TRAVEL**:

    47a. Q: Annual meeting for ECCS Impact recipient:-How many, where, how many people should come; who should come?

    A: Per the FOA, page 4, the recipient should plan to attend annual meetings of the recipients (this annual meeting is for the recipient not the community teams); thus 5 annual meetings over the 5 years. Location has not been determined but will be in the contiguous US. It is expected that at least one person, the Project Director or her/his designee would attend each of the annual meetings. As the program progresses, guidance may come out about additional desired attendees.

    47b. Q: Community Teams – meeting once, in person for learning collaborative. How many, who on the community team; who should pay for this travel; where?

    A: The FOA requires community teams to attend one meeting over the 5 years in person to participate in a learning collaborative. Location has not been determined, but it would be held in the contiguous US. It is desired that key members of each community team attend along with the ECCS Impact Project Director or his/her designee. We anticipate this meeting being held in the first year of the grant.

    47c. Q: Local onsite community team meetings: how many, who should attend?

    A: There are no specifications for exact number, attendance or location of local meetings or meeting among community teams in the state/territory that the ECCS Impact recipient may request the local teams to participate. It is recommended to review the requirements of the local teams and the activities they are to conduct to develop your work plan accordingly.

48. **Q: If we selected one community only, would that community team go thought 3 successive 18 month cohorts?**

    A: In all probability yes, depending on the need of the community and areas chosen.

49. **Q: Does our MIECHV community need to participate in year one or can they phase in over the course of the grant period?**

    A: Per the FOA page 4, "Community CoIIN Teams will be required during the course of the award to...participate in a CoIIN, committing to a working period of 48-60 months.

50. **Q: Will the slides from the TA webinar be available?**

    A: They will be available until March 15, 2016 on the following website: http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/index.html.

51. **Q: Can you talk a bit more about the two generational approaches? Do you have any examples?**

    A: Please see definition in Glossary and the link that is provided for examples.

52. **Q: Is there a separate evaluation logic model to the program logic model?**

    A: They can be combined or separate. Please note in your application and in attachment if you combine.

53. **Q: Is there a format or template for the competing continuation summary report and is that report part of the 80 page limit?**

    A: There is not a form or template. Please refer to page 16 in the FOA for the elements that should be in the summary. Attachment 9: Summary report is included in the 80 page limit.

54. **Q: If we are not submitting anything for attachments 8 or 9, do we attach a document saying that we're not submitting or just ignore those two attachments?**

    A: The electronic form may require you to insert a page. On that page state that you are not submitting a priority request for Attachment 8 and that you are not a current ECCS grantee, thus not submitting Attachment 9. Please contact the grants.gov call center with any issues or questions about this.

55. **Q: For those of us who have the current ECCS grant and will be submitting, are we considered a competing continuation, Type 2 applicant in the SF424 form?**

    A: Yes, that is correct. If you do not have a current ECCS grant, you8 would be a New applicant, known as a Type 1.

56. **Q: Our application is coming from the same University but with different PI and department. Are we a continuation or new? Do we submit a progress report?**

    A: Please check with your institution if the new applicant/department uses the same DUNS # as the current ECCS grantee department. If so, you may be considered a continuing competition and would need to complete Attachment 9. Please contact grants.gov call center for technical assistance and clarification on this issue if they are the same DUNS #.

57. **Q: Will the Performance measures be the same as those for MIECHV when they are approved?**

    A: No.

58. **For the letters of agreement for place-based communities, can we just have a list and not the actual letters, like the advisory team? Who would be the signatories on that letter/who are the most important people to sign?**

    A; No, we would like to see one letter from each community. Please refer to the criteria for what the reviewers will be evaluating regarding community. It should be the leadership person who can actually demonstrated the level of commitment and engagement to be part of the CoIIN activities included in the application, per the FOA.

59. **Q: In our agency, a director authorizes us to write one letter to represent all aspects of our agency. Is that allowable when talking about things like home visiting, title V?**

A: Anybody that has that requirement should review to see if the key partners are included.

60. **Q: What is expected for the different years of the grants? From years 1-2 and 3-5, are there different expectations?**

61. A: Please see desired outcomes, page 5 in FOA.

62. **Q: One of the requirements for the community teams is to submit monthly data, what will that look like?**

A: That will be decided during the CoIIN process.

63. **Q: When reviewers look at each section, will they also see the corresponding appendices that will help inform the topic?**

A: Yes, they will review the entire application.

64. **Q: I'm confused as to what we're supposed include in the methodology section. It sounds like the topics and strategies are all to be determined. Are describing the process by which we would go about convening with partners, communicating with partners, running a learning collaborative in a more generic way?**

65. A: Please review the criteria that are reflective of the methodology section. Note the requirements for developing plans for several areas and the extent to which the application describes them.

66. **Q: Are there any administrative limitations or caps for this program?**

A: Award funds may not be used to pay the salary of an individual at a rate in excess of Executive Level II or $185,100. The rate limitation limits the amount that may be awarded and charged to HRSA grants and cooperative agreements. Individual's base salary is NOT constrained by the legislative provision for a limitation of salary. However, please provide an individual's actual base salary if it exceeds the cap. This information and a sample of the personnel cost breakdown can be found on page 38 of the SF-424 Application Guide.

67. **Q: How does a CoIIN and the teams work?**

A: For background on the CoIIN process, please see other MCHB initiatives using this model:
Child Safety – http://www.childrenssafetynetwork.org/CSCoIIN;
Home Visiting - http://hv-coiin.edc.org/;
Infant Mortality - http://mchb.hrsa.gov/infantmortality/coiin/.